[Further information on the ceremonies and related activities leading to formation of age-sets may be found in category 561.]

/208 cont./

782 bestrew the individuals with the blades of a fodder grass prized for cattle, and say the prayer. This runs: 'Ng ai pasinai, nja iŏk ń gischu, jo ijok ń gischu kumok, ninĝua ijŏk čiolonga = may God give us cattle, give us many cattle, keep us healthy. While driving the captured livestock together, they sing a song of praise, which begins with the words; Hai narok, oho, Hai kindera ije oh = black God, oho, we hurry near, oh!

In sickness, both the patient and his relatives pray for health for him. In serious cases of illness a black ram or a black ox is slaughtered, and part of its blood is poured on the floor as an offering to God. If the sick person is an old man or an old woman with numerous descendants, one slaughters a likewise black, gravid cow, whose calf is left lying outside the kraal for God, after the place has been sprinkled round about with the amniotic fluid.

• 796 782 Both in order to honor God and at the same time to supplicate him for something, the Masai celebrate feasts at approximately monthly intervals; these usually take place on moonlit evenings, more rarely they start in the morning or early afternoon.

One of the most frequent supplication feasts (ol ogŏr = the supplication feast) is the ol ogor l ol geretti, which during some periods and in some regions is celebrated almost every month, in others at considerably greater intervals, by the married men and the boys together, in order to supplicate God for the preservation of the health of human beings and livestock. In the kraal a large fire is kindled [392] [824] with dry wood (from the ol oirien tree), upon which green wood with leaves (from the os segi tree) (1)

1. Cordia quarensis Gürke.

is tossed, so that a strong development of smoke comes about. A [824] powder made from the wood and bark of the ol mogoŋgora liana, which smells like incense, is sprinkled in the fire. The thick column of smoke climbs toward the sky and takes the fragrance to God. Now one leads up a large black ram, washes it carefully [824] with honey beer, and sprinkles it with the powder of the e matanguju tree. Then it is suffocated, drawn, and cut up. /209/ Each of the

/209 cont./

796 782 participants eats a small piece of the meat, after he has roasted it in the ashes. Furthermore he is given a strip of the skin, from which [751] [260] he then fashions amulet rings, one for himself, the others for his relatives. The ring protects the wearer from sicknesses of every kind. Men wear it on the right middle finger, women wear it on the large spiral-shaped neck ornament of iron wire. During the feast the participants constantly sing: [539]

Hai narok, oho, Hai kindera ije, oh,
Hai narok, oho, Hai ndogo ijok oh!

(Hai ndogo ijok = may God feed us; aldog = water the cattle, ndogo ijok = give us to drink, give rain.)

796 782 233 On the following day the women carry fresh cattle dung to the ashes and knead a mash from it, into which is mixed a medicine that an ol goiatiki has prepared and brought along. With these preparations the second part of the supplication feast has begun, which is called ol ogor l oñ gischu, i.e., supplication feast for the cattle. Amidst the same songs as above the women spread the medicine on the livestock in the form of lines and curves, and, to be sure, on the spines of the cows and female sheep, on the right side of the belly of the male animals and those females ones that have not yet dropped young. With this the feast is over. The goats are not smeared, but are driven to pasture even before this ceremony. As the reason for this the Masai say that 'Ng ai does not like goats because they do not modestly carry their little tails hanging down as a fig leaf.

796 782 842 791 Another supplication feast is celebrated only by the married women in order to implore God to give them children. It is called iruga 'Ng ai ol adjo, i.e., may God hear the word. In or near the kraal the women gather in the forenoon, together with a sorcerer (ol goiatiki), around whom they station themselves in a circle. Every woman is then given an amulet by him, which she hangs on the hip cord of the skin apron. Then he sprinkles their heads and shoulders with a medicine, which, besides milk and honey beer, also contains one of his secret remedies, for which he is rewarded with a few sheep. Then the women dance and sing throughout the day under a shade tree, during the night in the kraal, until dawn.

/209 cont./

796 782 [842] [539] In the songs the following prayer is constantly repeated: 'Ng ai atasaia, 'j' oschiage aomon, kiamon ag' ije kiamon eñ gera, eñ golobi en aischo, i.e., God, I implore you always; I pray, we pray to you alone, we pray for children, for birth for the barren woman.

Whereas the supplication feasts are usually held on the es sobiaĩn days (from the 18th to the 20th of the month), a joint supplication-prayer, ol dogóm, often takes place on the day of the new moon. The people of the kraal gather in the evening and, from a [272] [237] [415] [824] [539] buffalo or cattle horn, drink a mixture consisting of milk, a cold extract of eñ gaitetojai twigs (Commelina Merkeri K. Sch.), and a white powder obtained from the ol oiboni, while they say the /210/ prayer: 'Ng ai jo ijok eñ gischon, jo ijok ñ gischu, jo ijok eñ gera! That is, may God give us well-being, livestock, and children. If a larger supplication feast is to be held in a month, the joint supplication feast always precedes it on the first day of the month.

782 783 [784] If a small child of one not long detached from the warrior standing dies, he not infrequently sees in it a punishment from God for his having killed a pregnant woman on an earlier expedition, provided that he once killed a woman who might have been in this condition. In order to obtain forgiveness, he offers God a black gravid sheep, and, to be sure, close to the spot where at that time he committed the deed. Before he kills the animal, he prays to God, mentions the purpose of the sacrifice, and asks for pardon. As penance for his misdeed, he throws the blood and amniotic fluid (eñ gepa) of the sacrificial animal, as well as the fetus and uterus, both cut into pieces, upon the spot where it occurred. He takes along neither meat nor skin of the slaughtered animal, but leaves everything lying there when, after the concluded sacrifice, he returns to his kraal.

825 826 775 613 The lineage of the El kiboron believes that the bones of the buried corpses of their married men turn into snakes. They therefore do not kill these animals, like the other Masai, but are happy about their presence in the kraal and by the huts and, as soon as a snake appears, set on the ground a shallow dish with milk and honey as food for it. Snakes in and near El kiboron kraals are not rare.